




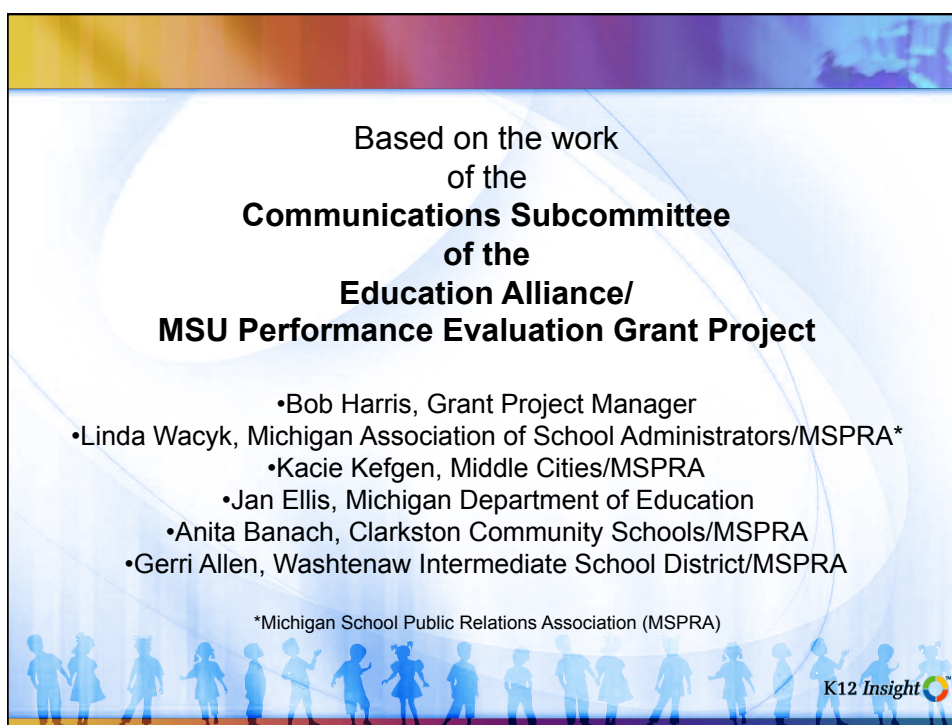
Let's talk!

Using effective communication to manage change

**Michigan Department of Education
Best Practices Conference
April 15, 2011**

Presenters:
Anita Banach, Clarkston Community Schools/MSPRA
Linda Wacyk, Michigan Association of School Administrators/MSPRA


K12 Insight 



Based on the work
of the
**Communications Subcommittee
of the
Education Alliance/
MSU Performance Evaluation Grant Project**

- Bob Harris, Grant Project Manager
- Linda Wacyk, Michigan Association of School Administrators/MSPRA*
- Kacie Kefgen, Middle Cities/MSPRA
- Jan Ellis, Michigan Department of Education
- Anita Banach, Clarkston Community Schools/MSPRA
- Gerri Allen, Washtenaw Intermediate School District/MSPRA

*Michigan School Public Relations Association (MSPRA)

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Goals for Today

We want to provide you with:

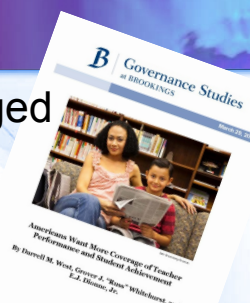
- **Tools** to proactively communicate with stakeholders.
- **Tips** for working effectively with the media.
- **Techniques** to keep the conversation focused on the positive.



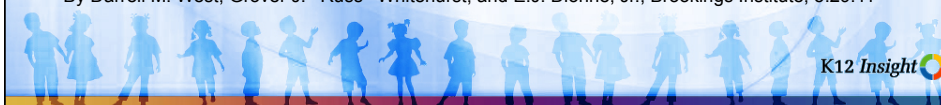
Who cares?

Survey of parents of school-aged children nationwide found the following to be priorities for parents:

- Teacher performance (82 percent want better reporting)
- Student academic performance (80 percent)
- School curricula (80 percent)
- School reform initiatives (77 percent)
- School finances (76 percent).



Americans Want More Coverage of Teacher Performance and Student Achievement
By Darrell M. West, Grover J. "Russ" Whitehurst, and E.J. Dionne, Jr., Brookings Institution, 3.29.11



Survey Data

We surveyed members of:

- Michigan Association of School Administrators (MASA)
- Michigan Association of School Personnel Administrators (MASPA)
- Michigan School Public Relations Association (MSPRA)
- Michigan ASCD

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Date of Export: 4/8/11, Michigan Association of School Administrators



Survey Data

We surveyed to discover:

- Knowledge of the new requirements.
- Who's involved in the process.
- Where districts are in the process.
- Tools that can be shared.
- Communication challenges.



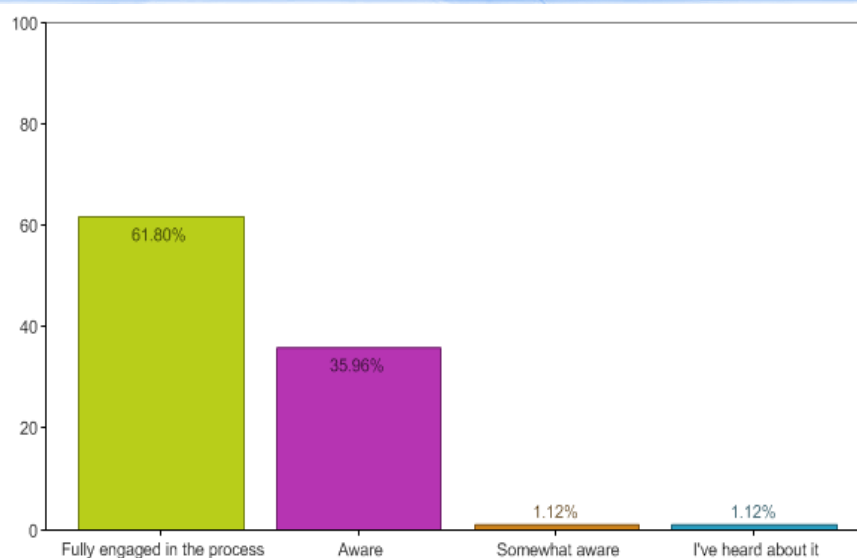
Survey Data

We had 179 responses:

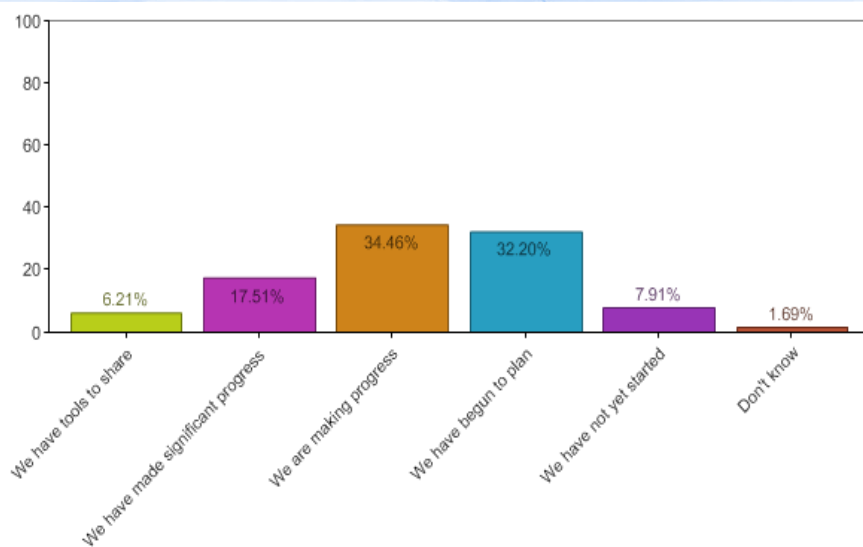
- Superintendents (69%)
- Human Resource administrators (18%)
- Communications professionals (8%)
- Other central office administrators (9%)
(Curriculum & Instruction/Business Officials)



Q2. Rate your awareness of Michigan's new requirements for annual employee evaluations for teachers, principals, and other district administrators?

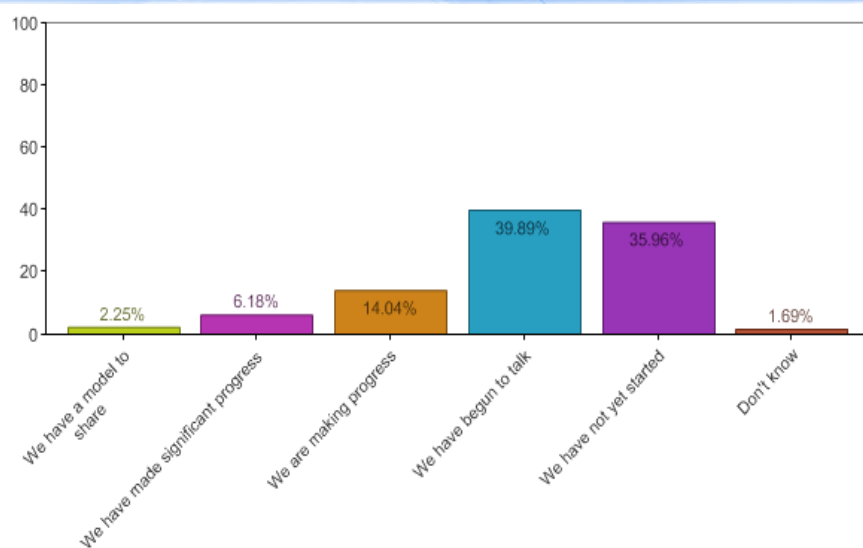


Q3. How far along are you in developing annual performance systems that take STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GROWTH into consideration when measuring the effectiveness of teachers/administrators?

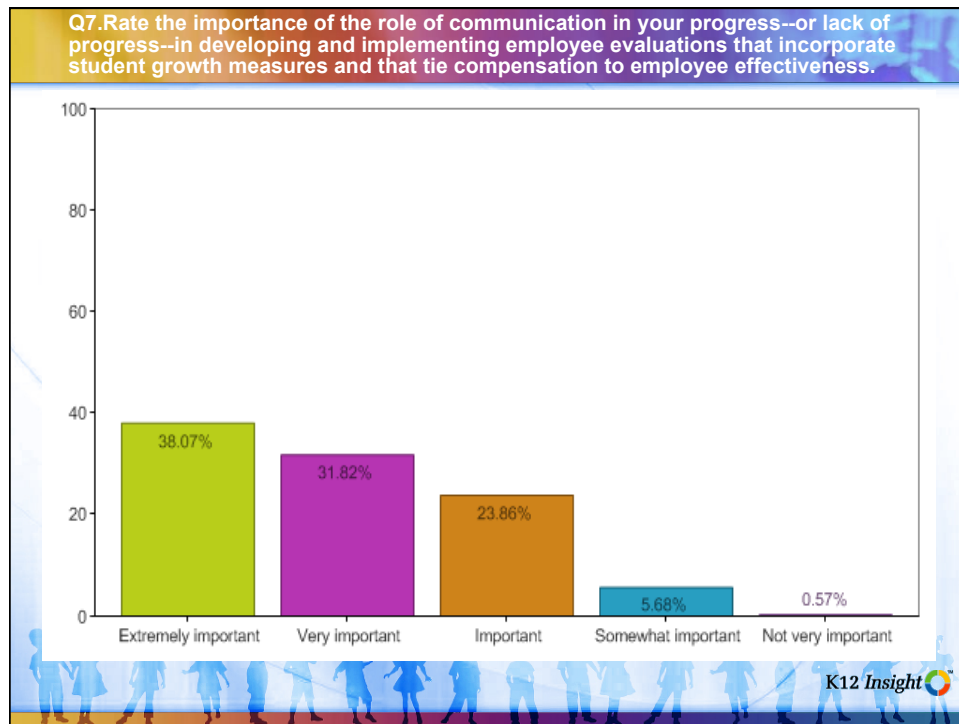


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Q5. How far along are you in negotiating a way to TIE COMPENSATION TO EMPLOYEE EFFECTIVENESS, as measured at least in part by student achievement growth?



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Communication

Ways communication has helped

- Built TRUST
- Dispelled FEAR and suspicion
- Controlled rumors
- Promoted shared understanding
- Inspired buy-in
- Promoted collaboration & saved time—no need to “re-invent the wheel”
- Shifted focus to improvement



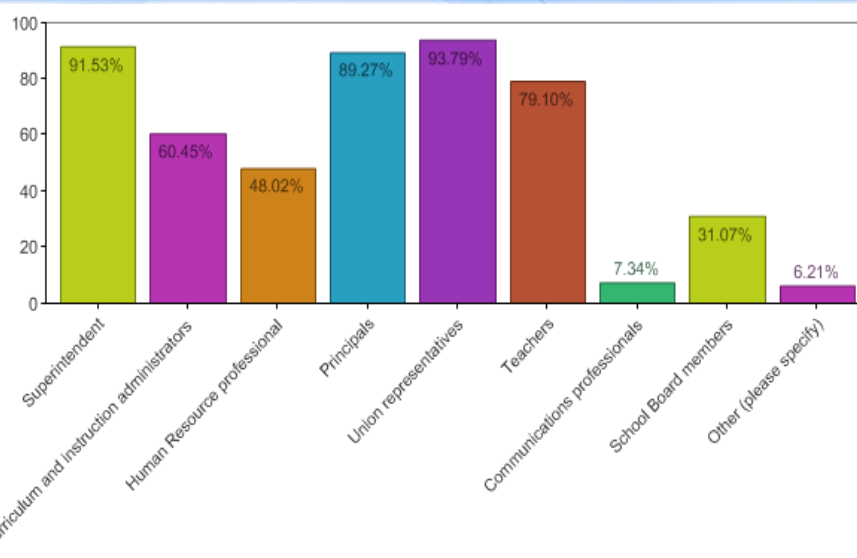
Communication

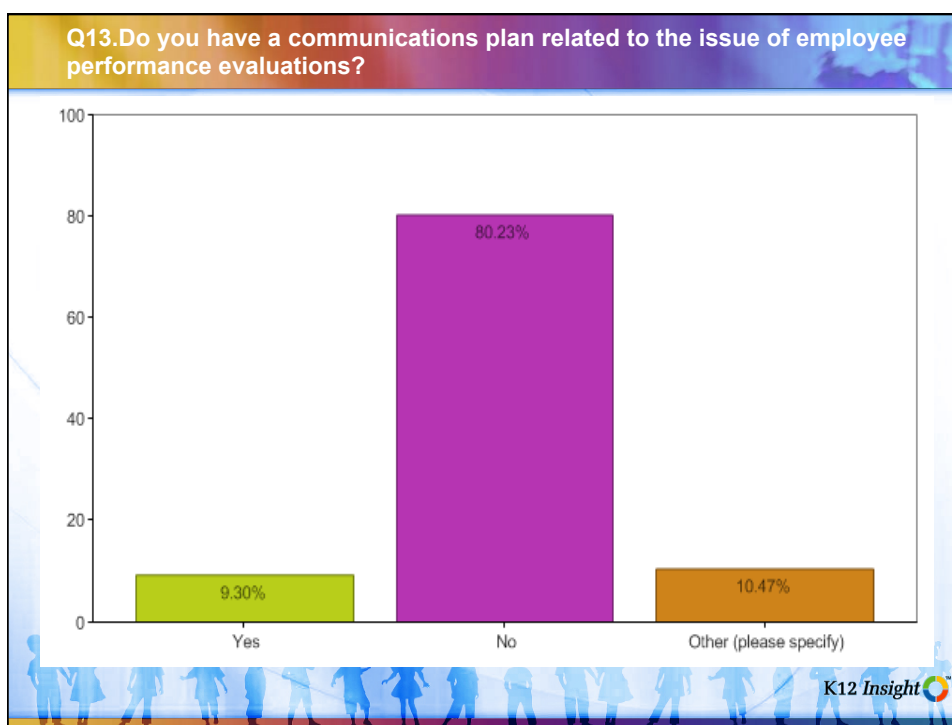
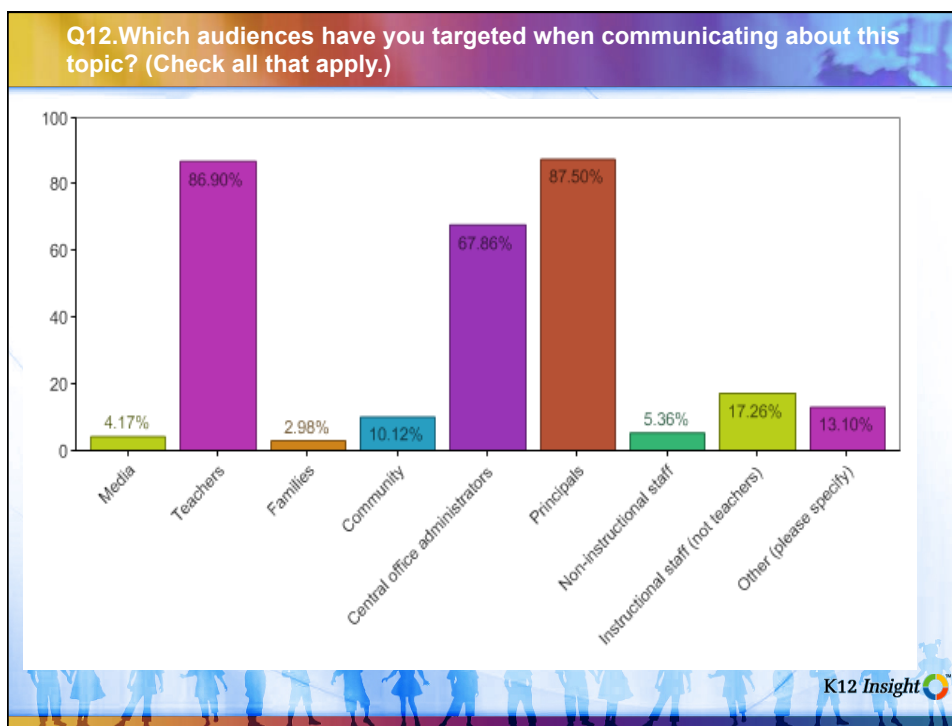
Communication challenges

- Lack of time & focus
- Confusion on facts
- Fear & resistance
- Misinformation/Disinformation
- Delayed information—stirs suspicion
- Disengagement by one or more parties
- Differing perceptions



Q11.As your district undertakes the challenge of implementing a new or improved employee evaluation process, who is involved in the conversation? Check all that apply.





Communicating about Evaluations

- Why do I need a plan?
- When do I need a plan?
- Where is my district now?
- Would I rather react?



Communicating about Evaluations

- Follow the RACE Formula:
 - Research
 - Analyze
 - Communicate
 - Evaluate



Use the RACE Formula

- R** ←
- Review the data.
 - Identify the communication issue(s).
- A** ←
- List your communication goals.
 - Determine your key audiences.
 - Determine your key messages.
- C** ←
- Develop your communication plan.
 - Follow the plan.
- E** ←
- Evaluate your communication plan.



Use the RACE Formula

- R** ←
- Review the data.
 - Identify the communication issue(s).
- A** ←
- C** ←
- E** ←



Use the RACE Formula

As you REVIEW your student data, ask:

- What are the results?
- What do they tell us?
- How do these data fit into our overall efforts to improve student achievement?
- How can we help our community understand how this fits into our overall efforts?



Potential Communication Issues

Given your data:

- What are your district's potential communication issues?
 - Did some grades do better than others?
 - Did some buildings do well and not others?



Analyze (and Plan)

R ←

A ←

- List your communication goals.
- Determine your key audiences.
- Determine your key messages.

C ←

E ←




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Analyze (and Plan)

ANALYZE

- What are your communication goals?
- Who are your key audiences?



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Analyze (and Plan)

Analyze

- What are the key messages you want to communicate?
- How will you frame these messages?



Communication Plan

R ←

A ←

C ←

- Develop your communication plan.
- Follow the plan.

E ←



Communication Plan

Your COMMUNICATION Plan

- What is your communication goal?
- Who are your audiences?
- What are the key messages you need to convey?
- What (methods of communication) vehicles will reach these audiences?
- What timeframe will you follow?
- Who will ensure the plan is carried out?
- How will you know if it worked?



Communication Plan Template

Audience:

Goal:

Communication activity:	Primary responsibility:	Timeline:	Evaluation:	Resources needed:



Audiences

Audience: School District Employees

- Explain results:
 - Brief school board members at a work session.
 - Hold district/school-based teacher meetings.
 - Have information sessions for non-teaching staff (nurses, guidance counselors, coaches, secretaries, bus drivers, custodians).
 - *Bonus question:*
Do you know who are the most trusted school communicators in your district?



Communicating about Evaluations

“The plan is in joint committee and is introduced to staff as we go along. The first phase was understanding why and how we will look at data; how we adjust our curriculum or instruction and then assess the impact of those changes. We have spent a lot of time ‘front loading’ all of this with good solid research to help staff understand that failure is not an option.”



Audiences

Audience: Parents

- Brief the PTA.
- Conduct meetings about the results with parents by grade level or school building.



Audiences

Audience: Students

- Meet with student council, student newspaper editor.
- Provide information for the school newspaper, student-produced announcements or television programs.



Audiences

Audience: Elected and/or Government Officials

- Invite legislators to your district to talk about the challenges and opportunities the data present.
- Hold information session for local leaders to discuss results.



Audiences

Audience: Business Leaders

- Meet with your local chamber of commerce education committee.
- Help them understand the data and its potential impact.



Audiences

Audience: Civic & Nonprofit Groups

- Develop a list of all civic organizations:
 - Kiwanis
 - Jaycees
 - Women's Club
 - NAACP/Urban League
 - Rotary
 - Alumni Associations
- Contact groups and offer a speaker/program on the topic.
- Enlist them to help with our schools.



Audiences

Audience: Media

- Provide a media kit for local reporters.
 - Include FAQs,
 - And a news release
- Help reporters understand what your schools are doing with the results.



Media Tips

Tips for Talking with the Media...

- Stick to the facts.
- Emphasize what you're doing to improve.
- Remain positive.
- Refrain from offering opinions about other districts' results.
- Contact MSPRA www.mspra.org if you need help with media relations.



Working with reporters

You can respond to a Reporter's Questions in several different ways.

- Answer directly.
- Give the answer you want to give.
- Don't respond.
- Admit your current lack of information (and respond later).
- Bridge to your information.



Working with the Media

Brainstorm:

- What media questions you are dreading?
- Now, let's practice responding to them.
- It's easier when you're prepared!



Getting out the good word

Remember, you can't rely on the media to tell your district's story.

Whenever possible:

- Use your district's own media to deliver your message.
- Never rely on just one medium to carry an important message.
- Use the Rule of 3.



Evaluate

R ←

A ←

C ←

E ← ● Evaluate your communication plan.




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Evaluate

EVALUATE:

- Amount, tone and **duration** of media coverage.
- Number of parent questions/issues.
- Community response/reaction.
- Adjust your communication plan for next time.



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Use the RACE Formula

In Summary...

- R** ←
- Review the data.
 - Identify the communication issue(s).
- A** ←
- List your communication goals.
 - Determine your key audiences.
 - Determine your key messages.
- C** ←
- Develop your communication plan.
 - Follow the plan.
- E** ←
- Evaluate your communication plan.



Tools districts need

- Evaluation models
- Information & talking points
 - Law
 - Research
 - Benefits for students/staff
- Communication templates
 - Press releases
 - Letters/emails/newsletter articles
 - Social networking
- Contribute resources to lwacyk@gomasa.org



Other Resources

Important Links

- **MASA Employee Performance Evaluation Resource Center**
<http://www.gomasa.org/performance-evaluation-resource-center-1>
- **MEA, AFT Michigan, and MASSP Teacher Evaluation Framework**
- **AFT Michigan**
[Local Guide to Developing Effective Teacher Evaluation Systems](#)



Other Resources

Important Links

On your district's web site include links to:

- **The Revised School Code (Section 380.1249)**
<http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?mcl-380-1249>
- **MDE Educator Evaluation Web page**
www.michigan.gov/oeaa



Other Resources

Important Contacts

- Venessa Keesler, Manager of Evaluation Research and Accountability, in the Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability
MDE-Accountability@michigan.gov
- Thomas Howell, Director of the Center for Educational Performance and Information
cepi@michigan.gov



Thank you
for your attendance
and participation in

**Let's Talk: Communicating About
Educator Evaluations**



